UNITED STATES KARATE ALLIANCE

BUSHIDO BULLETIN

July 2000 Volume 10 Issue 4

WORLD CHAMPIONS LOOKING FOR REPEATS, THREE-PEATS AND FOUR-PEATS

by Rick Nathanson, 7th Dan

Black belts **Cassandra Shults** and **John Manley** are looking for a three-peat, while **Phil Morgan** has his sights set on a four-peat.

The three grand champion winners from last year's World Championships will be in New Orleans July 27-30 to defend their titles at the 2000 USKA World Championships. It happens only infrequently that all three black belt grand champions are the same three individuals who won it the year before.

Also returning will be **C. Bruce Heilman,** who last year won grand champion in the weapons division and hopes to repeat the feat. Last year was the first time that the weapons kata division winners competed in a run-off for grand champion.

Ms. Shults, a student of **Sensei James Hawkes** in Albuquerque, claimed her berth in 1998 by defeating five-time Women's Black Belt World Fighting Champion **Monica Rivers** of Louisiana. Last year, Ms. Shults, who calls her reverse punch her "bread and butter technique," beat **Monique Dupuquier**, also of Louisiana.

A member of the Alliance Hall of Fame, Ms. Shults also placed second in her kata division at World, second in weapons kata, first in team kata with fellow dojo partners **Cathy Davis** and **Sue Hawkes,** and first place in team fighting with dojo mate **Amanda Bolton** and former friendly fighting rival Monica Rivers.

Mr. Manley, of Indiana, will defend his Men's Black Belt Kumite Grand Championship title. Last year, he beat fellow Hoosier **Eddie Bethea** and Louisiana's **Joe Dupaquier**.

Mr. Manley trains under **Glenn Keeney** and is a recipient of the U.S. Karate-Do Kai Bushido Award, a counterpart of the USKA's Hall of Fame. A

diminutive 5-foot, 4-inches. Mr. Manley uses movement and distance to control the fight.

"If I stand still I get beat because I give up reach on everybody," he said. "I'm in motion the whole time, but not a linear pattern. It's more circular."

John Manley, Dr. David Jordan, Cassandra Shults, James Hawkes

Last year, Mr. Manley relied on his backfist and reverse punch to outscore Mr. Dupaquier, and he threw more kicks in his match against Mr. Bethea.

Dr. David Jordan, Herb Johnson, Phil Morgan, James Hawkes

Yet another representative of Indiana, Hall of Fame member Phil Morgan, took home the Black Belt Kata Grand Championship trophy for his performance of "Go Pei Sho."

Mr. Morgan, a student of **Herb Johnson**, performed the same version of Go Pei Sho that is found in the Pinnacle, the text by the late **Grandmaster Robert Trias**. Mr.Morgan, however, added a few variations shown to him by **Ridgeley Abele** of South Carolina, a member of the Trias International Society.

Glenn Keeney & C. Bruce Heilman

During the grand champion run-off, Mr. Morgan used six "opponents" to demonstrate what he called "a higher level of Bunkai."

Mr. Heilman, who has long championed the idea of a run-off for Grand Champion Kobudo at World, not only saw it come to pass last year, but he became the first grand champion winner of the division.

Mr. Heilman performed "Shima Igiri No Kun," a bo kata named for the island of Shima in Okinawa. The kata, he explained, is actually two forms performed as a single entity, and which allows the practitioner to show dexterity, hand changes, power positions and flowing movement.

The run-off division in which Mr. Heilman competed included some tough competition from **Guy Holtzman** of California, Mr. Bethea from Indiana, **Buster Cotten** and **Kristin Gilliland** of Louisiana, and **Walter Gomez** from Argentina.

Mr. Heilman, a student of **Seikichi Odo** of Okinawa, is chairman of the United States Karate Alliance Kobudo Board, and president and a founding member of the International Karate Kobudo Federation.

Other grand champion winners at last year's World Championships to look for this year include **Chris Otwell**, **Angelica Drexel**, **Danny Widner**, and **Alejandro Saavedra**.

Mr. Otwell, who trains under Buster Cotten in Louisiana, captured the Youth Weapons Kata Grand Champion trophy; Ms. Drexel, who trains under **Danny Gilliland** in Louisiana, was the winner of the Youth Kata Grand Champion; Mr. Widner, who was all of 8 years old last year, won the Youth Kata Beginning Grand champion. He trains under **Terry Gruel** in Indiana; and Mr. Saavedra, who traveled all the way from Argentina where he trains under **Nestor Orellano**, took home two trophies -- one for Adult Kyu Kata Grand Champion, and one for Adult Kyu Weapons Kata Grand Champion.

Finally, look for another appearance by members of last year's Team Kata Grand Champions, which consisted of junior black belt **A.J. Stookey**, and brown belts **Paul Scott and Josie Porter.** The trio from Indiana trains under Mr. Keeney.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

by Rick Nathanson, 7th Dan

United States Karate Alliance directors James H. Hawkes and Dr. David Jordan, expect the Radisson Hotel New Orleans to be bustling with activity during World Championships. In addition to competitors from throughout the United States, there will be teams from Argentina, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Germany, West Indies, Peru, Philippines, France, and Chile.

More then 175 divisions will be offered in kata, kumite, kobudo, koshiki, ground grappling, adult and youth three-person kata and team kumite, continuous sparring, continuous team sparring musical forms, and sport chanbara.

And don't forget about the National Awards Banquet, to be held Saturday July 29. The top-10 USKA nationally-ranked competitors will receive certificates or trophies for their efforts in participating in USKA-sanctioned tournaments.

Their achievements will be witnessed by a number of luminaries from the martial arts world, including Senseis Hawkes and Jordan, Fumio Demura, German Bermudez of Argentina, Jose Guiral of Spain, Phillip Koeppel of the USKK, Glenn Keeney of the PKC, Herb Johnson, and Bruce Heilman of the IKKF.

Remember that the Radisson Hotel New Orleans, Southwest Airlines and Alamo Rent-A-Car are all offering discounts for USKA members.

See you in New Orleans!

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